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ABSTRACT

A proposal for a reading program to help the culturally, economically, and educationally deprived preschool child develop his language and concept formation before he enters school is presented. A home visiting remedial teacher would train parents to develop language skills and concepts through (1) specific fine motor skills, (2) sequencing skills, (3) visual-auditory and language perception, (4) reading suitable books, (5) using cassettes (if the parent cannot read), (6) developing location concepts, (7) using whole sentence structure skills, (8) viewing Sesame Street, and (9) utilizing older siblings. Approximately 25 preschool children from two to five years old will participate. They will be siblings of Title I elementary project pupils enrolled in remedial reading who are culturally and educationally deprived. Staff, consisting of certified reading teachers and aides, will visit each child and his parent at least once a week for an hour to oversee the training. The project will receive publicity through local radio station interviews, a brochure distributed to other educational agencies in the state, and informational feature stories in local newspapers. (DJ)

ED 068175

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EXTRACT FROM A TITLE I PROPOSAL, "An Innovative Program for Prevention of Reading Failure in Disadvantaged Pre-School Children by Home Intervention"[1]

The Home Start staff has had many requests for ideas on preschool reading readiness activities that could be incorporated into the local Home Start programs.

The attached pages from a Title I proposal (which did get funded) give some ideas that might be useful to programs interested in a developmentally sound reading readiness component.

[1]From Application made by School District Six, Greeley, Colorado, November 1, 1971 (Mr. Robert Tewksbury)

PS 005918

SECTION II - Statement of the Overall Goal of this Program.

This reading program is designed to help the culturally, economically, and educationally deprived pre-school child develop his language and concept formation befores he enters school so he will have better success in learning to read than one would normally expect for this child. The program will begin as soon as the applicant is notified after December 1, 1971, and will continue until June 30, 1972.

A. Performance Objectives to meet the overall goal.

Performance Objective #1 - An objective of the program is to increase the pre-school child's reading potential by teaching oral language skills in the home.

B. Activities to be implemented to accomplish the objective.

1. The home visiting remedial reading teacher will train the parent in the home to develop language skills and concepts necessary for learning.

2. The pre-school child will be taught fine motor skills with such activities in the home as:

   a. Tearing paper
   b. Stringing colored thread spools
   c. Buttoning
   d. Folding paper
   e. Tracing with hand or finger
   f. Following dots
   g. Outlining shapes
   h. Following patterns by stringing yarn through holes on a card

3. The pre-school child and parent will be taught sequencing skills by such activities as:

   a. Stringing colored thread spools
   b. Following dots
   c. Playing follow-the-leader type games
   d. Following cumulative directions e.g. "Get the book; get the book and get the magazine; get the book, get the magazine, and put them both on the floor;" etc.

4. The pre-school child will be taught visual-auditory and language perception by such activities as:

   a. Children play games that teach shapes, sizes, colors, similarities, differences, left-to-right sequence. "Color Lotto" is one game to teach color.
   b. Play "Shape Lotto" for shapes
   c. Trace shapes constructed of masonite
   d. Play "difference" games with Shape Lotto

e. Use Attribute Blocks to teach shapes
f. Use records, imitation, or actual sound to teach sound discrimination
g. Teach visual discrimination by using different sizes, shapes, and textures of common objects or easily made equipment made of items found in the home.

5. The parent will be given suitable books to read to their pre-school children. This activity is of special importance because recent research has indicated that one of the common variables to a child's success in reading is that the child was read to in his pre-school years.

6. If the parent cannot read English or Spanish, an alternative to the parent reading to the child is to lend a cassette player to the parent that has a recorded reading of the accompanying child's book. The recording will be in either Spanish or English.

7. If the parent cannot read English but can read Spanish, then any directions or written materials will be translated for the parent. In this way the main concepts can be conveyed.

8. A bilingual education approach will be used whenever needed. The main goals are to get the pre-school child verbalizing. At this point in his development it is not crucial that the language be English. It is important, however, that the child learn a language facility and that he learn some skills necessary to the eventual assimilation of knowledge.

9. Concepts of location will be taught by the home visitor and the parent by songs that describe and provide action, by games that describe and show location, and by talking with the child about objects and locations in the home.

10. Whole sentence structure skills can be developed by teaching the parents to use whole sentences with the child in regular activites, e.g. instead of saying "See, Ball" to the child, the parent will say, "Juan, see the ball on the table near the door." Several concepts are learned at the same time.

11. An exceptional tool that parents can use in the home is Sesame Street. Teaching guides are available for both teacher and parent. Lessons will be structured around concepts stressed on the television show that are a part of this planned language development program.

ED 068175

12. An additional activity will be the training of the elementary school remedial reading older sibling to help his pre-school siblings in language development. This training will take place in the project school remedial reading classroom. It is presumed that this feature of the program will result in an improved pupil attitude and a gain in reading ability beyond what will normally be expected. These assumptions will be tested, but they are not specific objectives of this proposal.

C. Evaluation of objectives

1. An observation checklist will be developed. The list will contain all of the specific skills that the teacher will stress. The child will be observed on the first two visits and his level of performance will be assessed by the trained teacher and aide. This will be followed by another assessment of level of performance on the same skills at the conclusion of the project.

2. An objective evaluator will also assess the skills progress (pre and post) with about 10 children, or a sample of the total population.

3. Data will be kept on the number of books read to the child by the parent.

4. Data and testing will be performed with these children beyond the time limits of the funding of this program. In effect, some longitudinal evaluation will be made of the participating child as he progresses through school.

5. Attitude assessments will be made by the teacher and aide of the participating children. These will be pre and post in nature.

6. Teachers and aides will submit their personal evaluation of the project.

7. Parents will be asked at the conclusion of the program, for their evaluation of their child's progress.

8. The ultimate evaluation, of course, will come when the pre-school child never becomes eligible for remedial reading classes.

D. Description of pupils to whom the objectives are applicable.

1. Approximately twenty-five (25) pre-school children will be involved. They will range in age from two years to five years.

PS 005918

2. Each child and parent will be visited at least once a week for at least one hour per visit.

3. The children will be identified as follows:

   a. Pupils who are already enrolled in remedial reading classes in Title I elementary project schools will be surveyed for economic deprivation.
   b. These pupils who are enrolled in remedial reading by Title I guidelines, identified as educationally deprived.
   c. The program will be restricted also to pupils who are culturally deprived.
   d. The pre-school children will be selected if they have an older brother or sister who meets the above qualifications. (3 - a,b,c)
   e. The Title I remedial reading program pupils and their pre-school younger siblings and parents will do so voluntarily.

E. Staff assigned to carry out the activities planned in the objective.

1. The staff will consist of certificated reading teachers and aides. The teachers and aides will work directly with the pre-school children in the children's homes. They will be teaching the children and also training the parents how to teach the children. The aides will assist the teacher, will help in drill with the children, if there is more than one pre-school child in the home, they will assist in record keeping of materials and observation, and will help produce materials for use by the child and teacher.

   In addition, the teacher will train the pre-school child's older sibling who is enrolled in a Title I remedial reading class. This pupil will learn also how to train his younger siblings. The pupil then will be a teacher of his siblings and his parents.

2. The certificated teachers should have a special training as teachers of remedial reading. A Master's degree level will be preferred. The ability to speak Spanish, rather fluently, will be preferred.
   The aides should also be able to speak Spanish. It would be desirable if the aides were parents of children who attend the project's schools.

SECTION III - Dissemination Activities to be Carried Out by this Program.

~~424~~

1. Three progress reports will be circulated to the project director, District Title I personnel, and to other District Six personnel.

2. The local radio stations will interview the home visitors, teachers, and aides.

3. A brochure describing the program will be prepared and distributed to other educational agencies in the state.

4. The local newspapers, Tribune, and Town and Country News, will carry informational feature stories.